

Dear Chairpersons and Members of the Appropriations Committee

My name is George Logan, Chair of the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission.

I 'm here today not only on behalf of the African American Affairs Commission on which I have proudly served for past 10 years, but more importantly on behalf of approximately 329,000 African-Americans living in Connecticut.

African Americans represent approximately 9.4 percent of the State's population. It is a proud and industrious community. There are some among us who have achieved the American Dream -- who have successful careers with well-paying jobs, a nice home in a safe neighborhood with good schools. They are, at least for right now able to pay for their medical expenses, AND put food on the table. But for far too many Connecticut African Americans, this is not the case. Far too often, African Americans live in the Other Connecticut. The one not posted on billboards, or touted by the Commission on Culture and Tourism. It is the Connecticut where far too many people go hungry, the Connecticut where a disproportionate number of people experiencing the negative effects of public policy are Black.

Here are a few facts about the life experience of Connecticut African Americans and these are true whether or not the State budget is in surplus or deficit.

EMPLOYMENT & INCOME

The unemployment rate for African Americans is twice as high as their white counterparts.

- For working African Americans in Connecticut, the median hourly wage of \$14.44, is \$5.50 less than the median income earned by whites.
- Statewide, the homeownership rate among Blacks is 46%, while homeownership among whites is 72%.
- African Americans are twice more likely than whites to be rejected for conventional mortgages, but twice as likely to be targeted for subprime home loans and other forms of predatory lending.
- Connecticut has nearly 302,000 businesses, but only 3.4% are owned by African Americans.

HEALTH

The health status of the African American community is worse than any other racial or ethnic minority in the state.

- We are at higher risk for the chronic diseases of diabetes, stroke, cancer, cardiovascular disease.

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As recently as 2006, the African American infant mortality rate was more than 300% higher than infant mortality of whites statewide.

Despite being 9.4 percent of Connecticut's population, African-Americans are 30.2 % of the dialysis population.

Nearly 45% of all newly infected people with HIV are African American.

These statistics are indicative of the status, or lack thereof of African Americans in Connecticut.

This was rationale and basis for establishing the State of Connecticut African American Affairs Commission. This Commission is the vehicle by which the African-American community gains access and hopes to achieve equity. It is the means by which the Legislature and those in positions of authority can become informed.

The AAAC role as a connector is vital not only to African Americans, but to the State as a whole. Elimination of the African American Affairs Commission would destroy the State's ability to create informed and effective policy and negatively impact the quality of life for all Connecticut residents.

As a result of initiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the State Department of Public Health, this Commission works with the Department to improve health outcomes for African Americans. Through the AAAC's active participation in a number of joint ventures including the Connecticut Multi-Cultural Health Partnership, Comprehensive Cancer Partnership, and Sexual Violence Prevention Partnership, it gives vital consultation related to establishing protocols for outreach and standards for culturally competent service delivery to communities of color. Most recently the AAAC serves on the newly formed Commission on Health Equity (CHE) to help eradicate health disparities for all residents of the State.

There are many other partnerships, interventions and accomplishments of the African American Affairs Commission. Others can be found in my written testimony.

In closing, I respectfully request that the Appropriations Committee and the entire Legislature wholly restore the budget of the African American Affairs Commission and continue to seek to meet the needs of our vital African American Community.